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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/04/2017

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SUBJECT: PM AA/S MULL'S CALL ON AUSTRALIAN DFAT DEPUTY  
SECRETARY RITCHIE - FTA REVIEW

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REF: CANBERRA 1711

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Dan Clune for reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (C) During a November 30 call by Acting Assistant Secretary Stephen Mull (reftel), David J. Ritchie, Deputy

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Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

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(DFAT), said new Trade Minister Simon Crean wanted to examine the U.S.-Australia Free Trade Agreement as part of a general review of all Australian FTAs which the Labor Party had promised in the election campaign. Ritchie offered his view that this did not mean the United States should anticipate trouble over the FTA.

12. (SBU) Embassy followed up directly with Crean's office. Crean's senior trade advisor Bernie Eades said the purpose of the reviews was to see how existing FTAs are performing, with an eye to developing benchmarks for use in negotiating future FTAs. He said the review would be an econometric review, and would probably be contracted out to an academic economist. He did not anticipate holding hearings in Parliament or having public comments on the report.

MCCALLUM